

# THE NATION

## AND ATHENÆUM

### CHRISTMAS BOOK SUPPLEMENT

#### THE ENGLISH SCENE

**The English Scene.** (A. & C. Black. 7s. 6d.)

**Fly Fishing.** By VISCOUNT GREY OF FALLODON. Revised Edition, with Wood Engravings by ERIC FITCH DAGLISH. (Dent. 10s. 6d.)

**Foxhunting.** By SIR CHARLES FREDERICK and others. (The Lonsdale Library. Vol. VII.) (Seeley, Service. 25s.)

**Enchantments of the Field.** By H. A. BRYDEN. (Seeley, Service. 15s.)

**The Folklore Calendar.** By GEORGE LONG. (Philip Allan. 12s. 6d.)

**Rambles in Britain's Birdland.** By OLIVER G. PIKE. (Herbert Jenkins. 7s. 6d.)

So various is the country scene, yielding to each man different knowledge and pleasures, that in a single stretch of it the bulk of all that is described in these volumes might be noted at some time or other throughout the year.

Beside the river sits Viscount Grey, as deeply attentive to the employment of his quiet days as of his grave Ministerial ones. "Some great events, some angling crisis, there will have been during the day. . . . But very pleasant the evening is in the hot bright weather of June. I am often ashamed to think how much passes unnoticed in the actual excitement of angling, but the general impression of light and colour, and surroundings is not lost . . . is found there at the end of the day like a blessing given by great bounty to one who was too careless at the time to deserve it." Behind the writer of that the shade of Walton seems to stand. Still glides the stream. . . .

Meanwhile, not so far distant maybe, Mr. Oliver Pike is rowing out in search of a grebe's nest on the impulse of a dream the night before. "I had two strange dreams; in the first I discovered the rare nest I wanted so much, under my dining-room table! The bird was one of the most gorgeous birds I ever saw, far more wonderful than anything in real life. The dream faded, and in the second I saw the nest in a certain spot on the lake." The next day he entered his boat again, "and rowed straight to the spot I had seen so clearly in my second dream. When I parted the reeds I saw to my surprise that there was a nest. . . ."

The sound of violin music steals to where the angler and bird-watcher sit silently alert by lake and stream. It leads us to an old garden, and there, peeping over the wall we see "the white costumes and gay ribbons of the Morris dancers flit in and out between the rich greenery and the brighter tints of the flower beds," while Mr. William Bampton fiddles for the troupe he leads, which has a continuous history for five hundred years.

Summer passes; the leaves fall from the trees; and those monuments of the past life of this country stand the more clearly revealed, the watermill, tithe barn, moot hall, the pound—all those that are so admirably reproduced here in "The English Scene."

Now the air reverberates to the hunting horn, and Sir Charles Frederick and his "field" of noble contributors come full cry through the brake in the seeming confusion of haste, but actually, though aglow with their sport, coolly occupied with some portion of their 350 pages of instinctive knowledge of the chase; tradition, etiquette, procedure, so that at every one of the score of crises that face them while in our view they make instant decisions with the assurance of forethought.

"Enchantments of the Field" is a book somewhat akin, but that Mr. Bryden does not confine himself to England but deals with blood sports the world over. It is excellently written and the chapter on "A Great West-Country Sportsman" is of particular interest to those who live about Exmoor.

Viscount Grey's "Fly Fishing" is a revised edition of the original volume. Two new chapters have been added,

and it is illustrated by wood engravings by Eric Fitch Daglish. Altogether a beautiful as well as technical book, deserving a place next to Walton on the shelf.

The dedication of Mr. Pike's volume to a friend "in appreciation of many happy rambles we have had together in Britain's birdland" is an indication of its manner. No mere text-book, but easily written as though the reader were that friend. It is, in fact, a country ramble, with photographs that imply a world of patient watching.

"The Folklore Calendar" is a guide to all old English customs and revels, from their origins to their present forms of survival or revival—mummers, Morris dancers, gipsies, Druids. Not omitting the old practice of "shoeing the colt" which the reviewer himself underwent on the occasion of his first harvest when a farm-pupil. Needless to say, the "shoeing" was a prelude to provision of the where-withal for the drinking of one's health!

"The English Scene" is another example of good printing and picturesque photography. Several chapters have appeared as articles in the TIMES. It is not a guide to England's architectural treasures, but to the history of her workaday life as told in wood and stone—the mills, turnpikes, canals, &c. A valuable record.

ADRIAN BELL.

#### "THAT GREAT LEVIATHAN"

**The Case for the Sea-Serpent.** By LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER R. T. GOULD, R.N. (Retired). (Allan. 12s. 6d.)

THE Sea-Serpent, having been summoned to show cause why he should not be banished, with the unicorn and the barnacle goose, to the limbo of legend, has retained Commander R. T. Gould for the defence, and is to be congratulated on his choice of counsel. Commander Gould wields a pleasantly pungent pen in controversy, and as shown by his great work on "The Marine Chronometer," he has a scientific turn of mind and an immense capacity for research. He has the further advantage of believing in his brief; that is to say, he believes that, while very many reports of the "Sea-Serpent" are due to hallucination, mistake, or wilful falsehood, there do actually exist large marine creatures of a type or types not yet identified, but "much resembling in outline and structure the *Plesiosaurus* of Mesozoic times."

Commander Gould puts in, in evidence, about thirty reports, dating from 1734 to 1923. These are given, wherever possible, in the actual words of the original observers, extracted from sworn depositions, official reports, diaries, and letters. The authenticity and credibility of these reports, together with any collateral evidence, and the arguments of contemporary sceptics (also quoted *verbatim*) are discussed and analyzed in a spirit of critical inquiry. Having called and examined his witnesses (who include eminent scientists and officers of the Royal Navy as well as merchant skippers, seamen, and travellers), Commander Gould proceeds to develop his own theory, and to answer (very ably) the more general objections such as that—so familiar in these days of detective fiction—What becomes of the body?

Commander Gould probably would not claim that all his evidence is of equal value; but its cumulative strength is great, and the present reviewer at any rate is prepared to accept his contention that the test instances of the *Dædalus*, *Valhalla*, and *Umfali* alone are sufficient to establish his case, unless we fall back on the highly unscientific assumption that an antecedent improbability, for which there is no valid argument, is sufficient to put the clearest positive evidence out of Court. Convinced or not, no candid reader can follow Commander Gould's development of his case without interest and admiration.

C. E. F.

## THE WORLD IN THE LIBRARY

- Island Builders of the Pacific.** By WALTER IVENS. (Seeley, Service. 21s.)
- The Red Men of Nigeria.** By CAPTAIN J. R. WILSON-HAFFENDEN. (Seeley, Service. 21s.)
- Exploring for Plants.** By DAVID FAIRCHILD. (Macmillan. 21s.)
- Myths and Legends of the Australian Aborigines.** By W. RAMSAY SMITH. (Harrap. 21s.)
- Under the Red Star.** By NORAH ROWAN-HAMILTON. (Herbert Jenkins. 12s. 6d.)
- I Sailed with Chinese Pirates.** By ALEKO E. LILIUS. (Arrow-smith. 15s.)

**A Book of the Basques.** By RODNEY GALLOP. (Macmillan. 15s.)

THANKS to the enterprise of travellers, officials, missionaries, hunters, collectors, and field-anthropologists, one does not have to stir from one's library, much less to circumnavigate the globe, to have a very comprehensive knowledge of the peoples, cultures, geographical features, and flora and fauna of the world. Here in one little issue of a publishing season is a batch of books, each by an expert in his subject or, at least, an eye or ear witness of the things described, to augment our knowledge and excite our interest.

Mr. Ivens has taken for his subject an interesting people living on the coast of Big Mala in the Solomons or in villages on islands in the lagoon between the mainland and the great reef which runs parallel to it, islands which they and their ancestors have built; by raising mounds of coral blocks dropped from rafts on to shoals in the lagoon. Of this people and their culture, Mr. Ivens, who lived five months among them solely to cultivate their friendship and gain their confidence, gives us a very full account. They evidently represent an intruding patrilinear people, who long since came to Mala and intermarried with the matriarchal people they found there.

Captain Wilson-Haffenden served in the Nasarawa Province of Nigeria, and his anthropological studies were confined principally to the "Cow" Fulani and the Kwottos, the former a pagan and nomadic branch of the Fulani who, though recognized by the settled Muslim Fulani as racially akin to them, are looked upon socially as Ishmaelites. Both Fulani and Kwottos are "Hamitic" in racial origin, with a possible Semitic element, but the Kwottos having married more freely with the negro have departed most from the Hamitic type. Captain Wilson-Haffenden describes these people and their cultures, and stresses the difficulty which European administrators meet with when the immemorial rituals of native peoples are tampered with and their moral sanctions impaired.

Mr. David Fairchild has compiled the present book from the notes of the Allison Vincent Armour Expeditions for the United States Department of Agriculture, 1925, 1926, 1927, of which he was a member. He describes visits to Malaya, West Africa, to Ceylon, Sumatra, and Java, for the purpose of collecting seeds and plants for acclimatization in the States. A very agreeable travel book, which incidentally emphasizes the happy position of the States, with their great range of soil and climate, in regard to the permanent acquisition of tropical and sub-tropical plants.

Dr. Ramsay Smith gives us a popular account of the myths and legends of the Australian blacks, illustrated with occasional references to their rites and customs. There is no attempt to demonstrate anything beyond the mind of the Australian as revealed in these legends and myths, which are told very attractively, but with here and there occasional intrusions of words and their ideas which it is difficult to associate with native Australian thought. For instance, in a tale of the Australian sun myth, the relator mentions the chariot of the sun; but how an uncontaminated native could have envisaged a chariot it is difficult to imagine.

Mrs. Rowan-Hamilton's descriptions of Russia under Soviet rule are sombre without exaggeration, and it is patent throughout that she has endeavoured to understand the point of view of those who, in pursuit of an ideal, have brought upon the Russian people the squalor and hardship and suffering she observed. One of the most interesting of her impressions is that of the simplicity of Soviet marriage and divorce. Good, too, are her descriptions of art and literature in this new world, more foreign to us perhaps than any described in the books here dealt with.

Mr. Lilius is an American journalist who sought copy and obtained it in a series of most amazing adventures among the Chinese pirates, with the leaders of whom he, nominally, enlisted, and so saw the work of these river-bandits at first hand. Had he not given us in his foreword such references as may not be lightly dismissed, one might have imagined the book to be sheer romance. To renew touch with one of the chief pirates, which he had lost, Mr. Lilius secured conviction and imprisonment in Hong Kong, where he seems to have been the despair of Governor and warders. Many of his adventures were perilous in the extreme—three times at least he bluffed his way out of what looked like certain exposure and death—but he came away not only with a fairly complete story of the pirates and their methods, but also with a wonderful collection of photographs.

Mr. Gallop has given us a really valuable account of the Basques and the Basque country. Treating his subject anthropologically, after a general introduction he deals with the people as if they were unknown, and he the first to spy out their land and their customs. The method is peculiarly effective, and might be applied to other peoples with advantage to our knowledge of them. Mr. Gallop makes a little too much perhaps of the "mystery" of the Basque survival; there are more peculiar and aboriginal peoples than they surviving into our own times, even in our own land; what really distinguishes the Basques from all such is the survival of their language, with its curious philological implications. A very agreeable and interesting book.

FRANK A. CLEMENT.

## CHRISTMAS BOOKS

It is a relief to be able to give books at Christmas. It lightens the responsibility. For a book is not, like most potential offerings, a lonely object; it is collective, it is ubiquitous, it is easy to get, and you can guess the countenance that will be shown it. Some like old friends with painted faces; for these Messrs. Harrap have supplied one more Omar Khayyam, on yellow paper, handsomely illustrated with houris. It should not be given to the hardened ritualist, for it contains both the first and the fourth edition of the poem, and this will put him out. Spirits a trifle bolder may be pleased with J. M. Dent's reprint of "Everyman," "adorned with cuts." Both are large volumes, and each costs fifteen shillings, which is a handsome price for a book.

No one should overlook the "Annual" (Cobden-Sanderson, 7s. 6d.), a selection from the "Forget-Me-Nots," "Keepsakes," and so on, of the nineteenth century; a book so pretty and so rare that it hardly reckons as a book at all—it is an object of Vertu. No one could be so callous as to call them literature, the little tale, the "moral song," succeeding each other like stiff little flowers between its pages. Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, presenting their nosegays consciously among the rest, give tone to the collection, but fail to put it to the blush. Then the engravings—one, in particular, more charming than the rest—but in short, you will scarcely find a prettier book than this. Taste and elegance mark it for their own.

It may be questioned how far a Christmas book should add instruction to amusement; but no sound ruling will exclude the new edition of Professor Okey's book on Venice ("Venice and its Story," Dent, 15s.), in spite of the learning of its author, and the information crammed between its boards. It is, in fact, exceedingly good value, containing, besides the usual substance of a guide book, a full, clear, and picturesque history of the Republic, its manners and its arts: all recommended by Professor Okey's very sympathetic style. Nor will the season frown upon the winter number of the "Studio" (7s. 6d.), devoted to Sir John Froissart, and filled with miniatures from the Harleian manuscripts. Mr. Coulton's short life of the chronicler is enlivened by many good stories.

The happy souls who do like poetry will be particularly happy if they are given Walter de la Mare's "Poems for Children" (Constable, 7s. 6d.)—collected mostly from his earlier books, so little need be said of them. The book itself is modest and agreeable; the poems, in their happy beauty,



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*The Times*: "This volume is the clearest all-round work on the Basque nation as it actually is which has so far appeared. . . . English readers are now provided with what will be for some years the standard work on a much misrepresented people."

**Diary of a Provincial Lady**

By E. M. DELAFIELD, Author of "What is Love?" "Turn Back the Leaves," etc. Illustrated by ARTHUR WATTS. 7s. 6d. net. [Dec. 10]

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seem to stand forth, in this connection, in especial radiance. If one could think of a fit object for the gift, someone, if possible, who had never, never seen any of these poems before—he would have to be young—but the young enjoy books most—what a glow there would be on each side; what a delicious experience!

Mr. Masefield's new book, "The Wanderer of Liverpool" (Heinemann, 8s. 6d.), alternates, though unequally, between verse and prose. It is the history of a sailing ship, told in great detail, but with extreme plainness: for example:—

"Early in the voyage the sailmaker, an Irishman, quarrelled with the negro cook and turned him out of the round-house. . . . Two Germans in the fore-castle during this voyage were able to converse together in Latin. A Swede in the crew made himself a fiddle out of a cigar box. . . ."

The ship's first setting out, and finally the loss of her, are described in verse hardly less plain; in the first piece, for instance, we are told of the engineman:—

"He was a faithful good servant to Potters, the owners,  
Had wrought for them many long years in the Liverpool Dock,

But this was his first going sailing to sea in a ship."

All through we find the simplicity of an early balladmaker, and his primitive intentness upon fact. It is a remarkable book, and so attaching that its technical detail scarcely narrows its appeal.

Then there is an essay by Virginia Woolf, a Lamb-like essay, rambling and delightful, "On Being Ill." One would be proud of giving that, or of possessing it. Slim, chaste, and elegant, it would stand upon the shelf, taking, without soliciting, the envious eye; and within it there are phrases, there are cadences—about the sunflower, for instance—but the worst of saving a favourite topic for the end is that one has no space left for the receipt of emotion. This author gives one two more chances: the uniform edition of "Night and Day," and of "A Room of One's Own." Perhaps the first of these, with all its variety of scenes, so rich, so real, so extraordinarily beautiful, filled with so touching a nobility, so deep a harmony, would make, in the right circumstances, the happiest choice of all. Imagine the young reader holding it, for the first time, in his hands, actual, unopened, or just embarked upon. . . . These, indeed, are the white moments of life.

K. JOHN.

### STANDARD WORKS

To those who have not taken up the "Pickwick Papers" for many years, let us urge that the experiment is worth making. We have been trying it ourselves, in the edition illustrated in colour by C. E. Brock (Harrap, 15s.), and can repeat the old verse with fresh feeling:—

"Ain't that there Boz a tip-top feller?  
Lots writes well but he writes Weller."

Here, too, is "Tom Jones" once more (Lane, 35s.), sympathetically printed, illustrated by G. Spenser Pryse, and with a few notes from S. T. Coleridge's copy. Good ghoulish faces and shadows drawn by S. G. Hulme Beaman accompany "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (Lane, 12s. 6d.); more apparitions, conjured up by Sonia Woolf, hover about "The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater" (Lane, 21s.); and with a different touch Henry Keen reflects the ironies of Webster's "Duchess of Malfi" and "White Devil," in large type, and in one volume (Lane, 21s.). Some still swear by Butcher and Lang's version of the "Odyssey," of which the Medici Press's reissue (25s.) is decorated with W. Russell Flint's beautiful pictures. A book remarkable for its low price is the excellent "Pilgrim's Progress" brought out afresh by Messrs. Constable (5s.), with an accurate text and a long essay by Charles Whibley. "The Swan Shakespeare" (Dent, 3 vols., 25s.) has an introduction and practical notes by C. B. Purdom; the drawings of costumes and scenes by Jean Campbell also strengthen its qualification for use by "little theatres" and amateurs. Writers of dramatic dialogue might purloin something from Whichcote's "Moral and Religious Aphorisms" (Mathews & Marrot, 7s. 6d.), a pretty reprint for which Dean Inge has broken his rule and written a preface. If anyone wants Boswell in shortened

form, he may take his choice of "The Conversations of Dr. Johnson" (Knopf, 8s. 6d.), in the introduction to which R. W. Postgate denies that "Rasselas" is read, and "Everybody's Boswell" (Bell, 10s. 6d.), to which is added the "Tour." Abridgments which look less sacrilegious are Southey's "Doctor" (Bell, 7s. 6d.), a clever condensation of a half-masterpiece, with editorial aids by M. H. Fitzgerald; and "The Heart of Thoreau's Journals," in which Odell H. Shepard reduces the fourteen original volumes to one (Allen & Unwin, 12s. 6d.). "The Bible Story in Modern Art" (R.T.S., 21s.) is a collection of famous scripture passages with sixty-four coloured plates by Harold Copping.

### BOOKS FOR BOYS

THIS year's batch is well up to standard in regard to Annuals and tales of adventure, but historical romance is sparingly represented, and Buffalo Bill seems to have fallen into disfavour; passing to stories with a games interest we find King Willow well set, but Rugger is ousting Soccer.

Of the perennials, one of the most attractive in appearance is "Collins' Aircraft Annual" (Collins, 5s.), which contains tales of air adventure together with instructive articles on such matters as a new invention to minimize the dangers of "stalling," how to read an aeroplane's number-plates, and how to build a model monoplane. "The Oxford Annual for Boys" (Milford, 5s.), edited by Herbert Strang, offers a wide range of interests: stories of adventure in lands near and far, sea stories, and excellent articles on such diverse subjects as the life of an otter, and how the "Talkies" work. "The Oxford Annual for Scouts" (Milford, 3s. 6d.) is of a special plan; when the scouts have enjoyed the tales, they will be able to pick up many useful tips as to the use of knots and splicings, and the way to achieve such masterpieces of cookery as campers and kabobs. "The Scout Annual" (Pearson, 10s. 6d.) is Vol. XXV. of "The Scout," over 1,000 pages. "The Boys' All-round Book" (Nelson, 5s.) is a splendid crown's worth: many illustrations, plenty of good stories, and first-rate articles on such popular topics as squash rackets, Rugby football, and tramping. "Blackie's Boys' Annual" (Blackie, 5s.) likewise offers good and varied fare, and is excellent value. The contents of "The Boy's Own Annual" (R.T.S., 12s. 6d.) are as enjoyable as ever, and we heartily support the tributes paid to it by the Prime Minister, Mr. Baldwin, the Earl of Meath, and Mr. Garvin.

Here's adventure! "Bran the Bronze-Smith," by J. R. Reason (Dent, 5s.), deals with a boy slave who becomes a freeman smith, and whose wisdom and skill at metal-working raise him to the position of counsellor to a great chief. The tale moves briskly, and the descriptions of life in Early Britain reveal a genuine knowledge of the period. "The Splendid Savage," by Conrad H. Sayce (Nelson, 3s. 6d.), is an engrossing story with an authentic Crusoe flavour. Sea adventure is represented by two books. "The Adventures of John Carfax," by Lawrence R. Bourne (Milford, 5s.), is about a Squire's son who is impressed into the Navy, but gradually earns his promotion to midshipman and returns home in triumph. There are exciting descriptions of voyages, storms, sea-fights, and cutting-out expeditions. "To Sweep the Spanish Main!" by Rear-Admiral E. R. G. R. Evans (Harrap, 7s. 6d.), tells of the thrilling adventures of two boys whom fate sends a-voyaging on the Main with a strange company of pirates in search of treasure. The pace is a shade too furious. We like to hear the clash of cutlasses, the whizz of balls, and the smash of round-shot—on paper—as much as anyone, but there are times in this story when we should have welcomed an occasional truce. This book is unusually well produced. "Vaino," by Julia Davis Adams (Dent, 6s.), recounts the adventures of a Finnish boy during his country's successful struggle for independence against Tsarist, and later Bolshevik, Russia. Vaino's mother strengthens her son for his exploits by telling him stirring Finnish legends. Mrs. Adams has written an interesting and unusual book; it is a pity though that stray Americanisms, such as "spill it," and "phoney," could not have been eliminated from this English



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edition. "Bringing Down the Air Pirate," by John F. C. Westerman (Ward, Lock, 3s. 6d.), is about a wonderful ship called the "Briton," which is equally navigable on the water and in the air. But the inventor's plans have been stolen, and a rival appears in a similar ship and turns pirate. How the "Briton" finally tracks him down in darkest Africa, is a story that every boy will revel in. Last, but not least, we welcome an old friend in new guise: "Kidnapped," by R. L. Stevenson (Milford, 10s. 6d.), nobly printed, with admirable coloured illustrations by Rowland Hilder, which both reflect the colour of the Highlands and the brooding mystery of the tale. Happy the boy who on Christmas morning finds this prize dangling from his bed-rail!

Now a volume which deserves a paragraph to itself: "Swallows and Amazons," by Arthur Ransome (Cape, 7s. 6d.). In brief, it is the story of two families of children, with a couple of sailing boats, who go cruising on a lake. Gifted with the right sort of imagination, they can invest the simplest things with romance. Although the book is intended for younger boys, we recommend it to young and old alike as one of the most delightful books we have read for years.

Next, some good school stories. "Captain of Keynes," by Richard Bird (Blackie, 5s.), tells of the events following upon the introduction of an unpopular measure by a new Head, and how the Captain of the School upholds his authority in the face of open rebellion. "Tringle of Harlech," by R. A. H. Goodyear (Ward, Lock, 5s.), is the story of the endeavours of two rival boys to achieve some outstanding feat which will secure their admission to an exclusive society called "The Singulars." Bold deeds and pranks alternate, and there are some good accounts of swimming matches. "Hatherly's First Fifteen," by M. R. Clark (Milford, 3s. 6d.), is set in Australia, and relates how a blind boy recovers his sight and is able to go to Hatherly. There he wins a place in the First XV., and, as a result, Hatherly gains the Rugby Championship for the fourth year in succession. This book contains some stirring descriptions of Rugby play. "Bellamy Comes back," by John Sweet (Milford, 1s.), has a strong cricket interest. Jack Bellamy, thinking he is to be sent to another school, vents his annoyance by turning into a slacker and a ragster. But, when his father lets him stay on, he reforms and wins his First Eleven cap.

Two historical books follow. "The Mastery of the Sea," by Colonel Cyril Field (Blackie, 3s. 6d.), is an account of the Royal Navy from the war-galleon of King Alfred's days to a modern 35,000-ton battleship. Not only are the different types of vessels described, but also their armament, and the men who fought and manned the ships. The uncle who wants to make a hit cannot do better than give this book. "Goldseekers and Bushrangers in New Zealand," by J. R. Elder (Blackie, 3s. 6d.), is the story of the hardships endured by the early prospectors for gold in New Zealand.

Finally, we come to a somewhat "doggy" list. "Thy Servant A Dog," by Rudyard Kipling (Macmillan, 5s.), is the diary of Boots and his friends, written from a dog's point of view in a special vocabulary, which is at once expressive and humorous. The book is full of delightful touches enhanced by Mr. Stampa's illustrations. "Let's Talk of Dogs," by Rowland Johns (Methuen, 6s.), is a collection of readable short stories in which dogs play the principal part. "Roc," by Edmund Vale (Dent, 6s.), is the heroic story of a dog that went through the Great War only to be run over soon after accompanying his master to England. "The Portrait of a Dog," by Mazo de la Roche (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.), is the biography of a dog told with charm and affectionate understanding by his mistress. "An Artist's Models," by Cecil Aldin (Witherby, 15s.), is a lively account of the dogs who have posed for him or come to him to have their portraits painted. It is illustrated with twenty plates in colour which dog-lovers will find irresistible. "The Vengeance of the Crows," by Louis Pergaud (Hamilton, 7s. 6d.), is a collection of twelve vivid tales dealing with the birds and wild animals of the countryside, their ceaseless struggle for existence and the eternal preying of the strong upon the weak.

## BOOKS FOR GIRLS

It is probable that the girl of to-day thinks of the "moral tale" as having died with Miss Edgeworth; yet it is a fact that there is a strong flavour of "uplift" in the majority of the Christmas books provided for her. No doubt the Girl Guide interest that pervades a large number of them is partly responsible for this. There is never any uncertainty about the ending: virtue must triumph in the last fifty pages. As long as the yarns are well told—and a great many of them are—that is just as well, for the righteous ending engenders the comfortable frame of mind that everyone likes to encourage in the Christmas holidays.

"Jean's Two Schools," by Ethel Talbot (Nelson, 5s.), is a particularly successful combination of entertainment and improvement. Winifred Darch, who gives the impression of having "inside knowledge," writes of delightfully human schoolgirls—and mistresses—in "The Lower Fourth and Joan" and "The Fifth Form Rivals," both published by the Oxford University Press (3s. 6d. and 1s.). "That New Girl Anna," by Cecily Fox (Nelson, 3s. 6d.) revives the well-worn theme of the foreign royalty in disguise and is wildly improbable, but amusingly written. Dorita Fairlie Bruce produces "The Best House in the School" (Oxford University Press, 5s.), a book about rivalries which it is difficult to put down.

For the older girl who wants something more than a book for the moment there is an enthralling volume, "Tales from the Panchatantra" (Basil Blackwell, 7s. 6d.), translated from the Sanskrit by Alfred Williams, the "Hammerman Poet," that amazing tiller of the soil and worker at the forge, who sat up late into the night teaching himself the classical languages, and acquired his knowledge of Sanskrit while in India on active service during the War. Very beautiful is the story of the perfect help and understanding he received from his wife, very tragic her death six weeks after his in the spring of this year. The Fables are delightful. Although much of the conversation is put into the mouths of beasts and birds, human experience in all its phases is the subject over which they range, and the age-old virtues and vices caper before us dressed in perfectly trimmed and pointed prose. Another volume of which the charm appears likely to last is Miss Rhoda Power's "How it Happened"—stories from general folklore, already familiarized in the wireless programmes (Cambridge University Press, 7s. 6d.).

Then we welcome "The Chester Miracle Plays," done into Modern English and arranged for Acting by I. and O. Bolton King (S.P.C.K., 6s.). Humour has been so ruthlessly expelled from everything connected with religion that it is refreshing to hear Cain address Eve and Adam as "Mam and Dad," and Noah bickering with his wife at the entrance to the Ark because she refuses to go in. Dramatic societies could do much worse than consider this volume.

The Medici Society's contribution to the bookshelf is, as ever, one that can be warmly recommended. "The Canterbury Tales," excellently done into prose by Eleanor Farjeon, and illustrated by W. Russell Flint, A.R.A. (7s. 6d.), is bound to whet the young person's appetite for more Chaucer.

It is many years since the present reviewer read Selma Lagerlöf's "Christ Legends" in their original Swedish and was charmed by them, so it is a great pleasure to welcome the translation by Velma Swanston Howard (Elkin Mathews & Marrot, 8s. 6d.). On the whole it is well done. But why "little dead birdling" (page 195)?

There is another collection of legends—"Legends of the Flowers," by Janet Hepworth (Blackie, 3s. 6d.). Many of these are also connected with Christ, but by comparison with the others they seem to lack body and colour.

Bessie Marchant has accustomed us to expect an annual full-blooded story of adventure, and this year's is less sentimental and more enthralling than its predecessors. The scene is laid in Africa, the title "Laurel the Leader" (Blackie, 5s.). "Rosamond Takes the Lead," by E. E. Cowper (Blackie, 3s. 6d.), is a mystery story quite well worked out. "The Abbey Girls Play Up," by Elsie J. Oxenham (Collins, 5s.), describes less hair-raising incidents, in which Girl Guides take part, in a pleasant, readable style.



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GERALD GOULD in *The Observer*:—"A novel to be read and remembered."

*Manchester Guardian*:—"Crammed with the emotions of sensitive and articulate people."

"The Oxford Annual for Girls" (Oxford University Press) is again well worth five shillings. The articles are topical and interesting, the stories bright and original.

Mr. Punch is so familiar a figure that his Italian origin is apt to be forgotten, and the average Englishman would probably claim him as a kinsman; but it has fallen to a Frenchman, Octave Feuillet, to write "The Story of Mr. Punch" (Dent, 5s.), and he makes Italy the setting of his adventures. In fact, owing to a device of Punch's sharp wits, a hundred thousand English perish in an attack on Naples. Nevertheless, this very un-English and amusing little book makes excellent reading. The translation is by Professor J. Harris Gable, Head of the Publications Department at the University of Nebraska.

Less successful is "Sir Bob," by Salvador de Madariaga (Routledge, 6s.). It has flashes of wit, but to compare it, as the wrapper does, with "Alice in Wonderland" is greatly to overestimate its virtues.

Many of the verses in "The Moon on My Left," by Caryl Brahms (Gollancz, 6s.), have already appeared in the EVENING STANDARD. Like most ingenuous verse put into the mouths of children, it is apt to be irritating, but "The Barometer" and several other poems are really amusing.

"A Book of Marionette Plays," by Anne Stoddard and Tony Sarg (George Allen & Unwin, 4s. 6d.), suggests an original cure for boredom on wet winter days. It describes how clever carpenters can construct a marionette theatre, and the less gifted buy a "Toy Theatre" ready made, and gives very clear directions for acting the plays which form the bulk of the book. Those who saw the wonderful Italian little people will be much entertained by this glimpse into the workings of a fascinating and fantastic world.

### THE YOUNG IDEA

**Master Minds of Modern Science.** Edited by T. C. BRIDGES and H. H. TILTMAN. (Harrap, 7s. 6d.)

**The Wonder Book of Inventions.** By PROFESSOR A. M. LOW. Edited by HARRY GOLDING. (Ward, Lock, 6s.)

**Seven Ages of Invention.** By CYRIL HALL. (Blackie, 3s. 6d.)

**Rambles in Science. Telephones and Gramophones; About Coal and Oil; How We Harness Electricity.** (Blackie, 1s. 6d. each.)

**The Story of the Stars.** By DR. A. C. D. CROMMELIN. (Collins, 5s.)

**Old Man of the Woods.** By MARCUS WOODWARD. (Toulmin, 2s. 6d.)

**"... And Such Small Deer."** By E. V. LUCAS. (Methuen, 3s. 6d.)

OF these nine books, which are all admirably adapted to satisfy the natural curiosity of the young about this wide world, six deal with invention and three with natural phenomena. In looking them over, it occurred to the reviewer that there are few things which would surprise our grandparents more than if they could return and see the amount of science that is now available for the education of children (despite their own treasures, "What is a Comet, Mama?" and Peter Parley). Surely the production of such books as these is a welcome sign of the times. Perhaps the most interesting of them is the "Master Minds of Modern Science," which relates the achievements of over twenty distinguished scientists, and deals with subjects ranging from early life on the earth to television in our own day. Written in simple and readable language such as the average boy or girl can understand it cannot fail to stimulate all those who are eager to know more of the notable conquests of science.

The "Wonder Book of Inventions" is the latest addition to Messrs. Ward, Lock's series of Wonder Books, and deals with many recent inventions. Professor Low, who needs no introduction, has written in a most attractive and lucid style, avoiding all technicalities. The book contains over three hundred pictures of absorbing interest, some of which are in colour. The "Seven Ages of Invention" deals with the Ages of Steam, of Steel, of Electricity, of the Heat-Engine, of the Loom, of Flight and of Wireless; although the writing in this is somewhat technical, Mr. Hall has succeeded in making things clear and fascinating to the

young. The next three books on our list belong to Messrs. Blackie's series "Rambles in Science," and these are well arranged, with some excellent diagrams and photographs. "The Story of the Stars" is suitable to both young and older readers. Dr. Crommelin's explanations of the heavenly bodies are clear and easily followed. This book also contains many interesting photographs.

We diverge somewhat to "Old Man of the Woods," a nature-book, by Mr. Marcus Woodward, a friend of Scouts and Guides; the light-hearted tales are such as will excite the young reader to ask for books which treat the subjects dealt with more seriously. "... And Such Small Deer" is another of Mr. Lucas's animal books, and contains a number of essays and fantasies about animals from mice to elephants.

### BOOKS FOR SMALL CHILDREN

THE new Hans Andersen (Faber & Faber, 15s.) is a very agreeable book; Dr. James's idea of making a fresh translation was a happy one, because, among the dozens of previous English versions, there is not one whose maker had both a scholarly knowledge of Danish and an ear for English prose. How much does this matter? Some older readers are shocked when they realize from this edition in what a slipshod form they knew these tales by heart—others, it seems, are shocked in another way. A friend who picked the book up from my table was most indignant at finding a story called "The Dauntless Tin Soldier." "Dauntless tin soldier!" she exclaimed, "of course that is quite wrong, it should be 'The LITTLE Tin Soldier,'" and the volume itself, she said, was the wrong shape; it should be a small square book, and instead of coloured pictures there should be woodcuts. However, this book is meant primarily for those who are coming to Andersen for the first time, and they are undoubtedly in luck; the humorous tales—which include the best of all, "The Beetle"—have gained enormously in vigour, and the "Little Mermaid" is as touching as ever. Dr. James has selected forty of the stories, and the only complaint one might make is that he has given rather too large a proportion to the supernatural. "The Travelling Companion," "The Green Boy," and "The White Silk Boy" are so much alike that it is unlikely that he would have decided to translate all three if they had not turned, as they do, on the ghostly business which he relishes so keenly. The illustrations by Christine Jackson are excellent.

A new edition of "The Water Babies" (Ward, Lock, 3s. 6d.) is welcome. There was one a year or two ago, but it was abridged, and in this one, so far as one can judge from memory, the text is complete. Really, it is an extraordinarily good story, in the best Victorian style, and they had a genius for children's books. There are twenty-four coloured plates by Harry Theaker.

It is difficult to give an opinion on "The Child's Charles Dickens" (Cecil Palmer, 7s. 6d.), edited, with notes, by Patrick Braybrooke. The intention is to impress upon children the genius of Dickens, and the method is to give brief extracts from his works with notes which are panegyrics in simple language, for instance: "Three cheers for the jolly blacksmith and three cheers for Charles Dickens for telling us so much about him!" The extracts are extremely short, and it is difficult to see how a child, unacquainted with the action of the stories, would make much out of them. It is possible that they might whet the appetite of children who would not come across Dickens in the usual way; those who have access to him can, as a rule, read "David Copperfield," for instance, in its entirety, at a very early age.

"The World's Best Stories for Children" (Jack, 7s. 6d.) is an anthology of folk-tales and stories by famous authors, E. Nesbit, Louisa Alcott, Joel Chandler Harris, A. A. Milne, &c. There is a great deal of interesting reading in it; the selection is made by Winifred Biggs, and it is illustrated by Honor Appleton.

And now we come to the stories which are new this year. There is "Alice and Thomas and Jane," by Enid Bagnold (Heinemann, 7s. 6d.), which describes the adventures of children who live at Rottingdean; the children are



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real, and the adventures rather improbable. "The Wishing Wood," by Margaret Beatrice Lodge (Oxford University Press, 5s.), is frankly about magic—a pleasant book. "Hahtibee the Elephant," by Charles E. Slaughter (Knopf, 5s.), owes something to the Jungle Books, but it is a good story. "The Golden Forest," by Edith Howes (Dent, 6s.), has a purpose, it is "designed to bring to boys a knowledge of life and creation, and, above all, of fatherhood." "Kalulu the Hare" (Collins, 6s.) is a further instalment of the Rhodesian animal stories, told by Frank Worthington, and, like its predecessor "The Little Wise One," it is an excellent book. The "Katy Kruse Play Book" (Harrap, 5s.), by Rose Fyleman, is more juvenile than the others mentioned in this paragraph, and has cheerful illustrations in which dolls are posed to represent the children in the story.

"Here Be Dragons" (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.), a lively book of verse by F. Gwynne Evans, is illustrated by George Morrow, "Cartwheels and Catkins" (Shaylor, 3s. 6d.), by Wilfred Thorley, is somewhat in the tradition of a "Child's Garden of Verses." "The Four-Leaf Clover" (Elkin Mathews, 3s. 6d.), by Owen Rutter, is a combination of prose and poetry, but the poetry is not new. "My Own Poetry Book" (Blackie, 2s.) has verse by many different writers, and illustrations in colour. For once the publisher-author C. W. Beaumont deserts prose; his "Toys" (5s.) is a volume of rhymes for children, which though new have the air of familiarity which should mean pleasure in the nursery.

"The Children's Book of Wild Flowers" (Chambers, 10s. 6d.), by Gareth Browning, has useful plates by M. C. Pollard. The author's purely informative paragraphs are good, and might have been amplified and some of the rather sentimental introductions to them omitted. Gordon Browne's pictures and a simple text afford a courteous introduction to the "Little Children of the Great World" (Blackie, 2s.).

"Merrie England" (Collins, 3s. 6d.) is a book of plays suitable for children to act and produce, by Catharine and Maud Morin and by Violet Methley.

There is no space to do more than chronicle the Annuals—The "Children's Cargo: Lady Cynthia Asquith's Annual" (Eyre & Spottiswoode, 6s.) has some distinguished contributors, and the "Children's Play Hour" (Longmans, Green, 6s.), edited by Stephen Southwold, has a very good story by H. G. Wells. Then there are the famous "Blackie's" (5s.), and the Oxford Annuals—for Children (5s.), for Tiny Folks (3s. 6d.)—and "The Big Cosy Corner Story Book" (Ward, Lock, 2s. 6d.), all profusely illustrated.

## NOVELS IN BRIEF

**The River.** By TRISTRAM TUPPER. (Bles. 7s. 6d.)

The action of this unusually fresh and intelligent novel passes in a railway construction camp in the mountains somewhere in the south of the United States, presumably in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It is amusing to find a modern consciousness, influenced by the Russians, at work on such material. The vigour and spontaneous simplicity of the central theme, the love of the boy Allen John for the woman Rosalee, is complicated and perhaps a little blurred by the author's own subtlety. Allen John behaves and feels most delightfully like a boy, but the subtlety of his thought and speech is often far beyond his years. The engineer Logan, who knows the day of his death, puts in a typically Russian appearance, and pours himself out to strangers. Everyone acts on complex, sometimes even obscure, motives; but everyone does act.

**The Deepening Stream.** By DOROTHY CANFIELD. (Cape. 7s. 6d.)

Miss Canfield is sober, patient, and thorough; but her passion for the people in her book, combined with the nature of part of her material, saves her from being tedious. The daughter of an American Professor, Matey spends her childhood and youth mainly in small university towns. Long before America's entry into the war, she goes with her husband and two small children to Paris, where he is attached to an ambulance corps, and she lives with old friends and works for the soldiers. Only quotation, for which unfortunately there is no space, would do justice to the many passages (among others, the Fifth Symphony Concert and the arrival of the first American troops in Paris) where Miss Canfield reaches poignancy of emotion.

**They Die Young.** By JOHN SOMMERFIELD. (Heinemann. 7s. 6d.)

Anyone who is interested in the experimental work of clever young writers ought to read Mr. Sommerfield's novel. There is no need to be deterred by such eccentricities as opening a paragraph without capitals and arranging prose like free verse. Mr. Sommerfield is always intelligible, and his eccentricities are not without meaning. The novel starts with the death of the young man Christopher, and follows with a sketch of his life, first as an intellectual in London and then as a seaman in various American ports, to show how inevitable his early death was. The idea seems to be that, in general, magnificent specimens such as Christopher are doomed to die young, and that, in particular, there was nothing but death for a man who no longer found spiritual satisfaction either in intellectual or physical adventure. The first part of the book is disappointing; but it improves with the progress of the hero, who is more interesting as a seaman than as a Sitwellian poet.

**Last and First Men.** By W. OLAF STAPLEDON. (Methuen. 7s. 6d.)

Mr. Stapledon traces the history of mankind from our own time to its annihilation, some millions of years hence. We are the First Men, and, compared with some of our descendants, we are only sub-human; the last are eighteenth men. After a period of small wars, in which Europe is wrecked, China and America come into conflict, and an Americanized world state is established; but it must be confessed that it would be better to live in the dark age that follows the collapse of the world state. Then there succeed various civilizations and human types, some higher than others, and migrations, first to Venus and finally to Neptune. Perhaps there is too much ego in our cosmos for us to bear the contemplation of a world which no longer knows Shakespeare and Beethoven, but we do not envy even the highest of Mr. Stapledon's creatures.

**The Trader's Wife.** By JEAN KENYON MACKENZIE. (Hodder & Stoughton. 6s.)

The scene of this novel is set on the West Coast of Africa, in the last days of the slave trade, which had already been made illegal. Miss Kenyon seems to be a disciple of Mr. Thornton Wilder's. Her work is even more fragile and lucid than his, but not less shapely. With considerable skill, she plays the different elements of fiction off against one another. The psychological progress of the heroine Lucy, for instance, is almost entirely expressed in action, for Miss Kenyon realizes all the advantage action has over analysis in the portrayal of character. To know what is in Lucy's mind, it is indeed enough to be told how, when the slaves were brought down to the barracoon, she wept and watched them all day long through the telescope; and the inevitable climax does not need, and does not get, a word of explanation. Mr. André Durenceau's decorative little pictures go well with work so neat and delicate.

**Crowner's Quest.** By ADAM BROOME. (Benn. 7s. 6d.)

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Miss Borden has unfortunately seen fit to employ to get her story told. It involves, among repeated affirmations of purpose, the introduction of a mysterious, telepathic Finn, an astonishing creation for so level-headed and accomplished a writer. The third, which alone makes the book well worth reading, embodies some shrewd and interesting observations on English society as seen by an American.

**Mosaic.** By G. B. STERN. (Chapman & Hall. 7s. 6d.)

There is no reason why Miss Stern should not go on writing novels about the Rakonitz-Czelovar family for as long as her ingenuity and inventiveness hold out; but the dangers of so doing are only too apparent in "Mosaic," a great part of which reads like a parody of her earlier work on the same theme. Most of the present book is concerned with what is roughly the generation (1880-1919) between the contemporaries of the now famous matriarch and the moderns. The first part degenerates sadly into facile archness. It describes, in an irritatingly allusive manner, the marriages of the antagonists, Elsa and Berthe. But the second part, which deals with the sisters Czelovar in Paris, picks up rather well, probably because the emphasis shifts from the romanticized peculiarities of the people to their emotions.

### NEW WAR BOOKS

"Behind the Scenes in Many Wars," by Sir George McMunn (John Murray, 15s.), differs from the others on our list in being the work of a professional soldier who had distinguished service to his credit long before 1914. The Great War is seen by him, as by all professional soldiers who managed to survive it, in the light of an event which his past had prepared him to face. His life both before and after connects up with it, whereas it is precisely the fact of the war's being an isolated experience, something alien both to their past and their future, which the temporary soldiers feel so acutely. General McMunn is a practised writer with fine powers of observation and a lively sense of humour, and in the story of his Service life, from subaltern to Quarter-Master-General in India, there is not a dull page.

In "Roads to Glory," by Richard Aldington (Chatto & Windus, 7s. 6d.), we have a set of short stories, tragedies of dislocation and disillusionment, in the vein which readers of "The Death of a Hero" will be familiar with. Mr. Aldington is an eloquent witness, but there is a stiffness and lack of independent life about his characters which suggests that he would be more comfortable in another medium than fiction. "The Advance from Mons," by Walter Bloem (Peter Davies, 7s. 6d.), is an excellent volume in the "Soldiers' Tales" series. The author, a well-known German writer, who took part in the advance from Mons to the Marne as a Captain of the 12th Brandenburg Grenadiers, tells a plain tale without any working up of effects, but the marching and fighting of the First Army (Von Kluck's) which was checked so dramatically by Smith-Dorrien at Le Cateau could hardly have been more vividly presented. This book has already been drawn upon for the British Official History of the War.

Most war books seem to have been written by Infantrymen, but "The Gambardier," by Mark Severn (Benn, 8s. 6d.), is from the point of view of an officer on the Staff of a C.R.A. and as a Battery Officer of the R.G.A. in France. The part which deals with the battle of the Somme is the most interesting. A useful list and short description of the various types of guns and howitzers used in France is included. "As I saw It," by Alden Brooks (Knopf), also deals with the work of the Heavy Artillery, but here the unit is a French one. The author, an American, served with the French Heavy Artillery during the last year of the war, and gives a vivid impression of the fighting on the Marne when the German "Push" of 1918 was held up. One is struck by the large amount of moving about that was done in proportion to actual firing by the author's unit, and also by the extent to which the French Commanding Officers seem to have depended on an inexperienced American subaltern for assistance and advice.

"Salute of Guns," by Donald Boyd (Cape, 10s. 6d.), claims to recount the experiences of a temporary lieutenant of Field Artillery in France. The author must have been

singularly unfortunate in the batteries he served with; indeed, the officers he describes, from generals to subalterns, must appear as an unknown species to anyone who had ordinary experience with the B.E.F., nor is the sorry tale improved by its descriptions of lice, lechery, and latrines.

The first few chapters of "The Lonely Years," by Alan Thomas (Benn, 7s. 6d.), treats of the last days of the war in France, when the British troops were pushing hard on the heels of the retreating Germans and every British officer was received in the villages which had been so long in the invader's hands as a liberator and saviour. The remainder of the book describes with pathetic force the trials and disappointments of such an officer after demobilization when he tries to fit himself into civilian life and is unable to find anyone with any use for his services.

"The Yarn of a Yeoman," by S. F. Hatton (Hutchinson, 10s. 6d.), deals with the work of the Middlesex Yeomanry; it has some graphic descriptions of fighting, marching, and camping in Gallipoli, Salonica, and Palestine, but the author's determination to be breezy and humorous at all costs and his resuscitation of chestnuts are rather trying. "The Furnace," by Franz Schauwecker (Methuen, 8s. 6d.), describes the experiences of a young German soldier on the Russian and French fronts. It would have been improved if it had been considerably condensed, but there are some graphic descriptions of the condition of the German Army and its disintegration before and after the Armistice. "Scarlet and Khaki," by T. B. Marson (Cape, 10s. 6d.), deals with country life and sport at the end of the last century, the Boer War, Egypt, and Gallipoli with the County of London Yeomanry, and finally France with the R.F.C. It has some delightful stories, notably the one about General Trenchard and Maurice Baring.

"Thirty-Nine Months," by Victor Kelly (Benn, 8s. 6d.), is an account of the experiences of a young officer on Brigade Staff of 110th Infantry Brigade in France from July, 1915, to the end of the war. Mr. Ernest Raymond's "The Jestling Army" (Cassell, 7s. 6d.) makes dramatic reading; the characters are true to life, the Colonel, the Padre, and the story-telling batman are particularly good, but almost every figure who comes on the scene can be greeted as an old friend, and the atmosphere of the Front is well conveyed. "Chin-wag" (Christophers, 10s. 6d.), is a collection of letters written by boys of an East End Club (the Eton Manor Clubs) while serving on various fronts. Not only those immediately concerned will find in Major Gould Walker's "Honourable Artillery Company in the Great War" (Seeley Service, 12s. 6d.) pages to hold attention; from it, as from many records of the type, a good selection of vivid pictures of active service could be made.

### LIGHT READING

As usual, there is no shortage of new books designed especially for holiday reading. The name of A. P. Herbert immediately catches the eye. His "More Misleading Cases" (Methuen, 5s.) is in his happiest vein; writing the book must have been almost as much fun as is reading it. Mr. Herbert has that intimate knowledge of Bench and Bar without which effective satire is impossible:—

"THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, in his speech for the Prosecution, said: This case, Your Worship, though it comes up for decision in a Court of Summary Jurisdiction only, raises issues of grave national importance. Otherwise, I need not say, I should not be appearing in person before a mere magistrate.

"THE BENCH: Who are you?

"SIR ANTHONY DEWLAP: I am the Attorney General.

"THE BENCH: Ah, yes, we have heard of you. Proceed."

Mr. Herbert's frivolity and wit conceal, incidentally, some biting criticisms of the structure of our Society. At Westminster his talents would be largely wasted, but we should like, all the same, to see him there.

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Mr. Maurice Baring has made his own selection from among his poems, and those he has chosen illustrate his capacity for poetic communication. His expression is successful in inverse proportion to the amount of stimulus it receives from the emotions, and the "Elegy on the Death of Juliet's Owl" is a better poem than that on the death of Cecil Spencer. It is not thus, however, with the teasing genius of Laura Riding. Her poems, "A Joking Word," are occasioned by an emotion which is like a desert wind over her words, leaving dry bones which if the reader is willing miraculously come to life. Although her poetry is impersonal—universal—it requires an initial bias in the reader which is personal. In her preface, which is at once intimate and at arm's length, she writes: "Understanding poems is more important than reading poems. By reading poems you can perhaps become a friend, but by understanding poems you are a friend." This insistence on understanding is right. To understand is to appreciate, but without being fully understood in an appreciating sense these poems can give no satisfaction whatever. Every reader, however, will find in "A Joking Word" at least one poem which is for him a final and satisfying expression of something hitherto inexplicable, and this when it comes to be examined is a very great deal indeed. Some illustration of Miss Riding's poetic method may be found in a passage out of a previous book of essays: "The purpose of poetry is to destroy all that prose formally represents. It is an exclusive medium, and its merit depends on the economy with which it can remove the social rhythmic clutter of communicative language. . . . Poetry is narrow (like the poem on the page), broken, quick; prose is broad, rhythmic, slow. Poetry is personal, prosaic. Prose is social, dressed out in verbal amenities, poetic."

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JAMES THORNTON.

## TWO BOOKS ON PAINTING

**Masterpieces of Russian Painting.** (Europa Publications, Ltd. 3 guineas.)

**The Painter of Victorian Life: Constantin Guys.** (Studio. 2 guineas.)

THE exhibition of Russian Icons held last year at the Victoria and Albert Museum was a revelation to most people in England of the unsuspected artistic importance of much of Russian painting. Examples in this country were for the most part mediocre, often badly restored, and generally products of a period later than the best, which may be placed in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. This volume, admirably produced, containing twenty colour plates and forty-three monochrome reproductions of icons and frescoes from the eleventh to the eighteenth century, is a record of that exhibition, supplemented by a considerable number of reproductions of important works of the earlier periods which were not in the exhibition. Edited by Mr. Michael Farberman, it contains chapters by Sir Martin Conway on the "History of Russian Icon Painting," by Mr. Roger Fry on "Russian Icon Painting from the West European Point of View," by Professor Anisimov on its "Bloom, Over-Refinement, and Decay," and by Professor Igor Grabar on "Scientific Restoration of Historic Works of Art"; also a full description of the plates, with notes on iconography and style, a list of places in Russia where the chief examples are to be seen, and a bibliography. It affords a singularly valuable means of studying a branch of art which is difficult of access, an art which, as Mr. Fry points out, "in its main characters is singularly free from all the mechanism of representation, purified like music of all but its direct appeals to the spirit," an art which kept generally, during a long period, to the principles of Byzantine art out of which it arose, but yet developed its own characteristic variations both of style and of feeling.

Constantin Guys died in 1892, having remained almost entirely unknown during his lifetime. Anonymity was with him a passion, and it is related of him that once, when Thackeray had made some allusion to him in a London paper, Guys was so furious that he broke off all relations with his former friend. Baudelaire's "Peintre de la Vie Moderne," published in 1863—since even in this Guys would only allow himself to be mentioned as "M. G."—did less than might have been expected to obtain him the recognition which he deserved, so that his fame was mainly posthumous. It was an excellent idea to publish an English translation of Baudelaire's essay, illustrated by a large number of Guys' drawings, and made by "The Studio" into an exceedingly charming volume. Mr. P. G. Konody, who made the translation, contributes also a short introductory essay on Guys' life and work.

Constantin Guys was for many years special artist on the staff of the ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS. He travelled widely, and from the Crimea, from Turkey, from Spain, would send bundles of drawings which were then engraved and published in London, sadly transmuted from the liveliness and elegance of line, the sensitive balance of forms and masses, of the original. A few examples of these are illustrated in the book, the original and the engraving side by side, but the majority of the originals have disappeared. He was an artist entirely self-trained, and perhaps for this reason his work was curiously uneven; nor does he ever seem, oddly enough, to have acquired a sense of the relative

sizes of objects or a mastery of the rules of perspective. In many of his drawings colossal ladies are seen stepping into carriages drawn by horses no larger than dogs, or the nearer figures are smaller than those in the background. Fascinated by almost every aspect of contemporary life, particularly the parade of fashion and luxury, the pomp of military life, and the elegance of women, he used his remarkable gifts of line and composition to put his observations upon paper. "He searches," says Baudelaire, "for a certain something which, if I may, I shall call *modernity*. For him it is a matter of extricating whatever poetry may be contained in the historical aspect of fashion, of extracting the eternal from the transitory."

ANGUS DAVIDSON.

## A CLOSE-UP OF HOLLYWOOD

**Star-dust in Hollywood.** By JAN and CORA GORDON. (Harrap. 12s. 6d.)

WHOEVER wishes to survey Hollywood from the comfort of his own fireside can choose no more delightful guidance than that of the Gordons; shrewd and penetrating, and expert in observation and selection, they are admirably equipped to describe and expound. And what a theme for their accomplished pens is this Hollywood, amazing, grotesque, and terrible! Here success comes overnight, and is fabulously rewarded; eminence is poised precariously, and topples at a breath of suspicion; beauty is at a discount; and brains are hired at enormous rates and then disregarded.

The reader is introduced to the firmament of Hollywood, wittily classified as "stars," "planets," and "the Milky Way"—the galaxy of twenty thousand "extras" who optimistically wait for work and fame, equally felicitously designated as "the Band of Hope"; as well as to directors, writers, artists, cameramen, electricians, and, in fact, to the whole community responsible for the production of films. Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, Tom Mix, Buster Keaton, D. W. Griffiths, Von Stroheim, and other owners of famous names appear in these pages. We are shown how they live, how they disport themselves, and how they work.

The uninitiated can read no more illuminating account of the various elements which contribute to the making of a film than is contained in this book, for the authors, who had free access to the studios, viewed their activities with the eyes of laymen. Swift to apprehend, detached, unobsessed with personal predilections or theories or technical minutiae, they were able to seize on what is significant, and they have presented it in their own inimitable manner. The pundits, too, may learn something from this book; as, for example, from the brilliant designs for sets by William Cameron Menzies which are reproduced.

The picture of Hollywood and Los Angeles which the authors set before us may be taken as in the main typical of America as a whole; devastating and incredible, it corroborates what other observers have written: the domination of the dollar, the regimentation of behaviour and opinion, the riotous and vulgar squandering of riches, the hypocrisy of superficial culture, the crude showmanship of the revivalists, and so on. Of these matters the Gordons write, with a wealth of illustrative anecdote and with a full appreciation of their humorous aspect. They tell of a man who narrowly escaped arrest for suspiciously walking instead of motoring home at night; of "an English professor who earned over £1,000 a year in New York by telling ladies about the contents of books they ought to have read but had no time to read"; of a bathroom in Hollywood which had gold fittings and a musical-box attachment which played the "Wedding March" from "Lohengrin" when the plug was pulled; and of its owner, who a few months later "was hunting Hollywood for the loan of a £20 note."

One need not be a filmgoer or a sociologist to enjoy this entertaining book. It can be recommended confidently, even to those who never stray from the primrose path of novel reading. The man or woman who does not revel in it "is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils."

MARK SEGAL.

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